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Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of)	Federal Com. 2 4 1996
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service)))	CC Docket No. 96-45 Office of Secretary

MOTION TO FILE LATE COMMENTS

Pursuant to Section 1.46(b) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.46(b), Juno Online Services, L.P. ("Juno"), by its attorneys, respectfully submits this motion for late filing of the attached comments in the captioned docket. The unexpected unavailability of Juno's senior management made it impossible for the company to review and approve these comments prior to the filing deadline. Juno has not previously participated in this proceeding, and its comments are submitted just three business days late.

The Commission's inclusion of Juno's comments in the record is in the public interest, will not prejudice interested parties and will allow the Commission to more completely examine the issues raised in the Joint Board's *Recommended Decision*. Juno has personally served Commissioners, Commission Staff, Joint Board members and the parties to this proceeding, thus ensuring that all interested parties have an adequate opportunity to assess and respond to Juno's proposals in this docket.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Dated: December 24, 1996

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Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)	
Federal-State Joint Board on)	CC Docket No. 96-4
Universal Service	j	

COMMENTS OF JUNO ONLINE SERVICES, L.P.

Juno Online Services, L.P. ("Juno"), by its attorneys, respectfully submits these comments in connection with the Recommended Decision of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (the "Joint Board").

INTRODUCTION

Juno is the nation's leading provider of free Internet electronic mail ("e-mail") services. Unlike traditional e-mail providers, Juno does not charge its subscribers anything for use of the service. Instead, Juno has been designed to derive its revenue principally from the display of interactive advertisements, much as broadcast television has its costs underwritten by network and local advertising. In the eight months since its national launch, Juno has grown rapidly to more than one million subscribers, making it one of the five largest commercial providers of Internet e-mail in the United States, and by far the largest to provide e-mail to the public for free.²

The Joint Board's *Recommended Decision* proposes that the Commission apply Section 254(h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, 47 U.S.C. § 254(h), to provide dis-

¹ Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Recommended Decision, CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 96J-3 (released Nov. 8, 1996)("Recommended Decision").

² More information about Juno may be found at the firm's World Wide Web site http://www.juno.com>.

counts on Internet access, including e-mail, for America's K-12 classrooms and libraries.³ The promotion of Internet access for schools has the potential to usher in a new era in informational and technological literacy and educational opportunity for American children. Juno firmly supports the policy objectives behind the *Recommended Decision* and agrees with most of the Joint Board's specific recommendations.

At the same time, Juno believes that the Commission should ensure the competitive neutrality of the *Recommended Decision* by clarifying that (1) schools and libraries are permitted to subscribe to free e-mail services, in lieu of or in addition to discounted Internet access accounts, and (2) Section 254(h)(1) telecommunications discounts can be applied by schools to offset the long-distance charges associated with reaching a "dialup" number for their Internet access or e-mail provider. These changes would not provide any subsidy or other universal service support for Juno, but rather merely create a level playing field so that each school and library could arrange for the best, most cost-effective mix of Internet access and e-mail services that meets its specific needs.

I. FREE E-MAIL SERVICES OFFER SUBSTANTIAL ADVANTAGES OVER FEE-BASED E-MAIL FOR SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

E-mail is by far the most widely used Internet application, and for millions of Internet users represents their exclusive or predominant use of the Internet. E-mail is currently used by more than 50 million people worldwide (approximately twice as many as use the World Wide Web) and is rapidly becoming an indispensable communication tool. Juno believes that it is important for all American students to have equal access to this most fundamental Internet tool. Juno therefore strongly supports the Joint

³ Recommended Decision, ¶ 463

Board's conclusion that Internet access for K-12 schools and libraries must include e-mail services. *Recommended Decision*, ¶ 463.

The traditional model of Internet e-mail is fee-based; to use e-mail, one must generally purchase a bundled package of online tools, applications, and services, typically for a monthly subscription fee of \$19.95 per user "account." E-mail is one part of these Internet access packages, along with other components such as World Wide Web access, access to Usenet newsgroups, and file transfer tools. An individual or entity that wants to use only e-mail has historically been required to buy the entire package. Internet subscription packages are widely available commercially from both Internet Service Providers ("ISPs"), such as Netcom Online Services and AT&T WorldNet, and Online Service Providers ("OSPs"), such as America Online and CompuServe.

Juno has a fundamentally different business model. Like ISPs and OSPs, Juno allows its subscribers to exchange e-mail with anyone in the world who has an e-mail address that can be reached over the Internet -- including the millions of people who subscribe to ISPs and OSPs -- but unlike these traditional e-mail providers, Juno charges its subscribers no fees of any sort. Subscribers receive a copy of Juno's free "client" software for their Windows-compatible personal computer, and then use a modem to dial into one of Juno's more than 400 local access telephone numbers nationwide. Juno assumes the cost of the underlying telecommunications connectivity, except for the price (if any) of the user's phone call to his or her local access number.

⁴ OSPs differ from ISPs in that, in addition to providing "direct" connectivity to the global Internet, they generally provide original content, database tools, and facilities for real-time communication accessible only to members of a particular OSP's service. America Online is the largest OSP in the United States.

For schools, free e-mail services offer several important advantages over fee-based alternatives. First, while each student at a school should have his or her own individual e-mail address, it is not necessary to provide each student with a separate account for World Wide Web access. If every student receives a free e-mail account from a service such as Juno, the school could arrange for access to the Web by establishing one full Internet access account for every five, ten, or twenty students. This will permit schools to conserve their limited resources for the other substantial expenses that connecting classrooms to the Internet entails, such as computer hardware, system maintenance, and instructor training, see Recommended Decision, ¶ 507, and will enable the Commission to apply its limited universal service subsidy funds more broadly, accelerating the "wiring" of all American classrooms for Internet access.

Second, free e-mail accounts may be used not only on school premises but offsite as well, by students, teachers, and parents with access to a personal computer either
at home, at work, or in some other environment, without requiring that they each purchase an individual Internet access subscription at a cost of around \$250 per year. Free
e-mail thus allows students to remain "connected" regardless of their physical location
and makes it possible for teachers and parents to communicate electronically, creating
opportunities for greater involvement and interaction by all parties.

Third, the use of a free e-mail service frees a school to exercise more flexibility in its selection and ongoing reevaluation of Internet access options than would be possible if both e-mail and other components of Internet access came bundled from the same provider. If a school purchases its students' e-mail from an ISP or OSP, it cannot switch to a different ISP or OSP without undertaking the mammoth and greatly inconvenient

task of changing all its students' e-mail addresses, a process that requires all affected students to notify the dozens or hundreds of people with whom they correspond by e-mail of the address change. (There is presently no automatic system for announcing a change of e-mail address, meaning that painstaking correspondent-by-correspondent notification is necessary. Even with such notification, one can expect some amount of lost e-mail.) The considerable inconvenience of changing all of its students' e-mail addresses might be enough to convince a school not to switch access providers, even if a different ISP or OSP would be expected to provide improved service at lower rates.

By contrast, there is no inconvenience associated with switching World Wide Web access providers (or providers of other Internet services) where free e-mail is involved, because e-mail and Internet access are not provided by the same firm. If a school gets its students' e-mail addresses from Juno, changing Web access providers becomes a simple matter, not requiring a change in e-mail addresses. Consequently, the use of a free e-mail service could afford schools the freedom to exercise discretion and selectivity in choosing access providers and might be expected to be a procompetitive influence on the Internet access market.

All of these advantages do not mean that free e-mail is the only solution for K-12 schools and libraries. Some schools might opt to purchase and operate Internet mail servers on their local area networks, in effect operating as their own e-mail providers. Some might have equipment that is incompatible with the current version of the Juno software. Others may decide that the added costs (economic and otherwise) associated with fee-based e-mail are counterbalanced by other benefits. The advantages of free e-mail, however, are considerable, and free e-mail is one option schools ought to have

available to them, ought to be made aware of, and ought not to be discouraged from using. The Commission must ensure that its policies regarding e-mail are applied in a competitively neutral manner as between free and fee-based services, and should clarify that schools and libraries are not precluded from using a free e-mail service such as Juno.

The Joint Board recommends that the Commission provide discounts for Internet access for schools and libraries, and Juno fully supports this recommendation. However, subsidizing the use of fee-based e-mail when free e-mail is available could dissipate the limited resources available for achieving the Commission's goals. While large, the \$2.25 billion earmarked yearly by the Joint Board only begins to scratch the surface of the massive financial requirements associated with equipping schools with Internet access. To the extent that free e-mail services can supply some of the schools' needs, the Commission should foster the use of such services and conserve its resources for covering the costs of other forms of access, and related expenses, which are not already available in the market for free. This is a key part, Juno believes, of the "full flexibility among telecommunications services" the Joint Board has recommended for schools and libraries. *Recommended Decision*, ¶ 461.

The Commission's decision should, at the very least, clarify that schools are not precluded from using free e-mail services. The choice should be left to schools and the marketplace, and not dictated by Commission regulations. One other approach the Commission might consider is to permit schools, if they choose, to request "unbundled" Internet access pricing from ISPs and OSPs during the competitive bidding process.

While, as noted, the market trend in Internet access today is to offer a package of e-mail

and other Internet services to subscribers, schools may decide that they prefer to "mix-and-match" free e-mail from Juno or another provider with Web-only access from an ISP or OSP. While Juno does not believe that the federal government should require ISPs and OSPs to unbundle their prices, if the demand exists in the K-12 marketplace for such unbundled offferings, the Commission's universal service regulations ought not to be a barrier. Juno therefore suggests the Commission clarify that schools and libraries can request unbundled Internet access and e-mail pricing for purposes of Section 254(h).

II. THE FCC SHOULD PROMOTE EFFICIENT USE OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDS BY PROVIDING DISCOUNTS ON LONG-DISTANCE "DIAL-UP" CHARGES TO SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

One example of a cost which the Commission should subsidize, in part because it often affects most harshly those schools most in need of assistance, is the cost of linking a school's computers and the nearest access number of an ISP, OSP, or free e-mail service. In many (although a decreasing number of) rural and remote school districts, schools must pay long-distance toll charges to reach their chosen Internet or e-mail providers.

The Commission should clarify that discounts for telecommunications services available to schools and libraries under Section 254(h)(1)(B) can be applied to long-distance charges associated with reaching the "dial-up" access numbers of ISPs, OSPs, and free e-mail providers. Whether applied to calls made to reach fee-based or free e-mail providers, such toll discounts would be competitively neutral -- indeed, the funds involved would be paid to the schools' interexchange or other toll carriers, not to the e-mail providers. Toll discounts are also an important aspect of competitive neutrality because they would help assure that smaller Internet access providers, who do not have

as many local access numbers as major nationwide providers, can compete on an even basis for the opportunity to supply K-12 Internet access. By making long-distance telephone charges eligible for universal service support when used to reach an e-mail or other Internet access provider, the Commission will simultaneously assure competitive neutrality and alleviate the relatively higher costs borne by rural classrooms in connecting to the Internet.⁵

The Recommended Decision addresses this issue in Paragraph 464, where the Joint Board rejects subsidizing 100 percent of the cost of dedicated (e.g., private line) connections between schools and ISPs. The issue for dial-up access is quite different, however. Unlike the dedicated ISP-provided connections discussed by the Joint Board, toll charges incurred to reach an ISP, OSP, or e-mail provider on a dial-up basis are paid to an interexchange telecommunications carrier, not the Internet access provider. The Commission does not need to "single out the transmission component of Internet access" to subsidize these toll expenses, id., because they are the ordinary long-distance rates paid by schools for both voice and data communications, rather than a component of Internet access services. In the health care area, the Joint Board recommended that the Commission "seek information on the rate of expansion of local access coverage for ISPs in rural areas of the country and the costs likely to be incurred in providing toll-free access to ISPs and take these assessments into account" in deciding the scope of Section 254(h) discounts. Recommended Decision, ¶ 669. At the very least, this same

⁵ Juno provides more than 400 local access numbers nationwide, minimizing the circumstances in which users need to make a toll call to reach the Juno service. Juno's free e-mail service also has substantially shorter average holding times (on the order of one minute) than ISPs and OSPs. Many ISPs and OSPs provide fewer local access numbers than Juno, and all have much longer average connection times.

attention and study needs to be given to the long-distance charges paid by rural and remote schools to reach an Internet or other e-mail provider.

CONCLUSION

The Commission should adopt the Joint Board's recommendation that Internet access for K-12 schools and libraries be discounted under Section 254(h) of the 1996 Act. The Commission should ensure competitive neutrality in its universal service policies on e-mail by permitting schools and libraries to utilize either bundled, fee-based e-mail or free Internet e-mail. Furthermore, the Commission should focus on eliminating inequitable telecommunications costs currently borne by schools and students in remote areas, who have to pay long-distance toll charges to reach the closest local point of presence of their chosen ISP, OSP, or free e-mail provider.

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Dated: December 24, 1996.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Cindy Miller, do hereby certify on this 24th day of December, 1996, that I have served a copy of the foregoing document via first class mail, postage prepaid, to the parties on the attached service list.

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